

No 98 J.

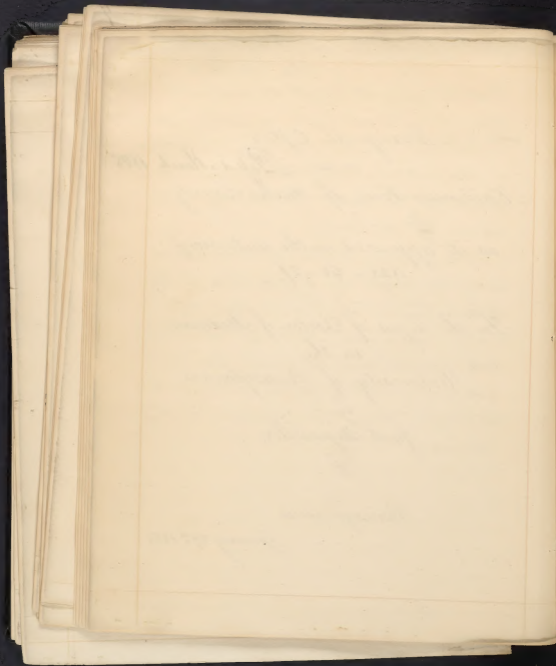
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Inaugural Essay
on an Epidemic Fever of Berks County
as it appeared in the autumn of
1825 - 26 - 27.

For the degree of Doctor of Medicine
in the
University of Pennsylvania
by
Jacob Wagnerseller
of

Pennsylvania

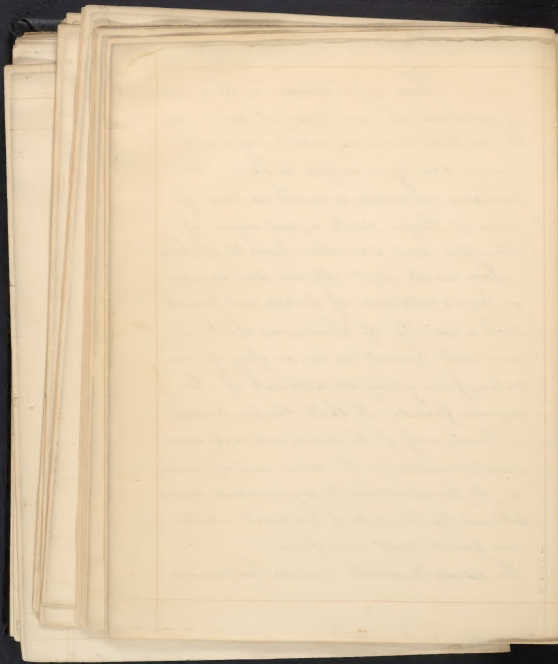
January 29th 1828



There is no disease in the records of medicine of such frequent occurrence, no one that commits such ravages on the human family, or baffles the skill of the practising physician, so much as that of fever: it therefore merits a great degree of attention and observation from the student.

Fever in its most extensive sense embraces so large a catalogue of diseases, and presents such a diversity of phenomena, which, at once will prevent me in an essay of this nature, from giving an account of its various forms. I shall therefore pursue one branch only of the disease, and make some general remarks on the nature and appearances it has presented to my immediate notice, followed by the mode of treatment which was found most successful.

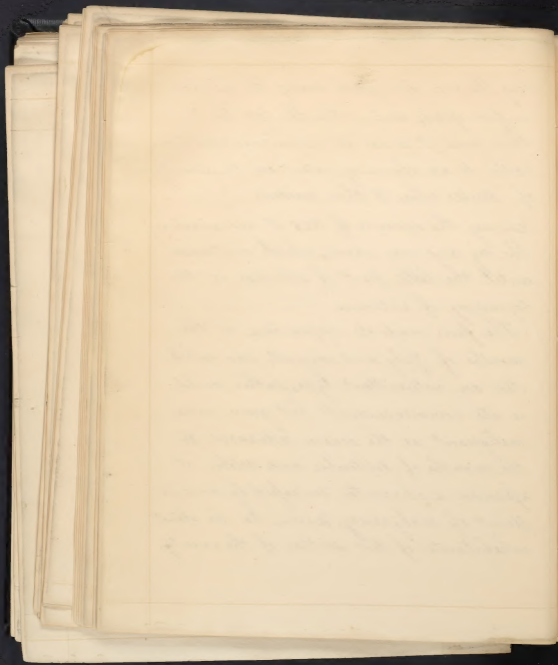
The disease to which I allude has prevailed



along the river Schuylkill during the last four or five years, and within the last two or three years it made its appearance and prevailed to an alarming extent in the County of Berks where I then resided.

During the summer of 1826 it was remarkably dry and very warm, which continued until the latter part of summer or the beginning of autumn.

The fever made its appearance in the months of July and August, and exhibited an intermittent type, rather mild in its commencement but grew more malignant as the season advanced. In the months of September and October it assumed a character surpassed by none in point of malignancy, known to the oldest inhabitants of that section of the country.



Causes.— The remote cause appeared to have its origin in the decomposition of vegetable matter, as is the case with epidemics of a similar nature.

Its first appearance in that part of the country was shortly after the commencement of the Schuylkill canal, and was attributed by most practitioners of medicine of that vicinity, to the putrefaction of immense quantities of vegetable matter; probably aided by the evolution of some peculiar principle from the exposed surface of large quantities of recently excavated earth.

It prevailed however quite extensively within the last two or three years, in the vicinity of one of the tributary streams of the Schuylkill, no doubt arising from miasm as it was very dry and consequently the sources of its production were great.

probably somewhat aided by the contaminated atmosphere being wafted from the Schuylkill by the wind, a distance only of three or four miles.

As I before observed it commenced in the months of July and August, and continued until the approach of cold weather, at which time, it subsided. It again commenced in the summer and autumn of 1826, and prevailed to a not less alarming extent; and again in the autumn of 1827, at which time it was comparatively mild and readily yielded to the ordinary treatment.

The exciting causes were various, such as sudden vicissitudes in the weather, severe exercise, intemperance in eating and drinking, exposure to wet, and to night air, wearing damp clothes, and long continued

watching, we saw the first ...

Symptoms. - The first ...

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and to some, the disease was accompanied by
nausea, vomiting, and a fever, was followed
by an eruption, and in which there was no interruption, and
instead of a violent fever, the patient only
felt a slight fever, and a slight swelling
of the lymphatic glands. The disease was
the same.

In other cases of the disease, there was from the
commencement no violent interruption, and
the patient was not accompanied by any
fever, and the disease was not
accompanied by any swelling of the
lymphatic glands. The disease, in all a
violent eruption took place by the efforts
of nature, aided by the administration of
appropriate remedies.

The disease sometimes assumes another course.
It commences as a vesicular eruption,
and the patient, after a few days be-
comes well, and the disease is cured.



to almost. We are now settled on the 10th of
the 1st of June of the year 1800 and have
been settled, at least 100 years. I have been
in the country a long time and I have
not visited to see you in the city of
New York. My mode of using this water was
to take down four to six drops, and to
take it up as often as I have done of course
before, giving me many times a day. I have
also, used it at night. I have sometimes
of warm water were given to me at the
time. I have also been cured by
a mixture of calomel and jalap of ten
or fifteen grains each, mixed with a
small quantity of glyster. I have also
of both calomel and jalap at the same time.

... by ... and under
to ... the ...
... and ...
... dipped ... water for 2 days or
two, at which time he in all probability
would be well.

Even not content with the disease was ...
... with great determinations to the
... but too often, large ... and active;
... was necessary to ... the ...
... but ... and
cold ...

... the ...
... and ...
... doses of ...
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with a few times, the patient found that the
medication was necessary; the head being almost
inflexible, the tongue thickened and of a greenish
colour, the bowels were constipated and the
stomach was almost entirely empty. About
the 10th day, the patient died, with no
signs of improvement upon the opiate
treatment, and no signs of recovery. The patient
called for a remedy, and a remedy was
given. The first was given in a quantity, followed
by recedes to the patient's condition, and the
cold applications to the head, and other
the rest of the surface of the body was
much above the natural standard, cold
water or vinegar and water, sprinkled with
a sponge and of great use to her.

It was then necessary to give the medicine
which was best accomplished by a recti-
fied mixture, at the same time continued

was seen in the winter and turned off with
casserine or castor oil Magnesia, if the stomach
were not too irritable.

The most common of this kind were some great
irritations; the next indications were to calm
the irritability of the stomach, and to induce
a slight relaxation to the surface. The
first was met by using the afternoon draught,
the oil of mint, or some other article of a
similar nature; and to accomplish the second
irritation action, recourse to a so hemipical
or small doses of tartarized antimony.

In conjunction with the above mentioned heat,
must calomel was given in doses of from one
to three grains, or when the stomach was very
irritable still smaller doses were given which
was turned off as before stated.

These affections were treated by cold applications
leeches, or cups, pediluvium, or demulcents to the

soles of the feet, and in the advanced stage, blisters over the affected organ or sometimes to the extremities, constituted the treatment which was found most successful for the disease in question, with occasional variations owing to idiosyncrasy or some other cause.

This treatment persisted in, would generally insure a cure in the space of one or two weeks, according to the violence of the symptoms, unless he was previously nearly worn out by intemperance, age, or disease, in which cases it frequently proved fatal.

The colic appeared to perform a very important part of the treatment, for almost invariably after the exhibition of a few doses, a discharge took place from the bowels, of a dark tarry fetid nature, followed by great relief to the patient.

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The tongue then became clean, the skin cool, relaxed and perspirable, the head relieved, the pulse slower, fuller and more regular.

Tonics were now demanded: the very best of which, appeared to be the sulphate of quinine, given in doses of one grain or more every two or three hours, aided by some bitter infusion, as the gentian, columba, or orange peel, together with a well regulated diet and appropriate drinks.

